

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-08 COME-00 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06  
OES-07 /077 W  
-----043797 250333Z /66

R 250215Z AUG 77

FM AMCONSUL SAPPORO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0459

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, JA, CH, UR

SUBJECT: SUCCESSFUL CHINESE EXHIBITION IN HOKKAIDO RESULTS IN  
PROPAGANDA SETBACK FOR SOVIETS

1. SUMMARY: LATEST ROUND OF SOVIET-CHINESE PROPAGANDA DUEL IN HOKKAIDO WON BY PRC WITH SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF ITS RECENT GOODWILL AND TRADE PROMOTION EXHIBITION IN SAPPORO. SOVIET CONSULATE GENERAL THERE ANNOYED BY PRESENCE OF CHINESE WHICH UNDERLINED PRC'S OUTSPOKEN SUPPORT OF JAPAN'S CLAIM TO SOVIET-HELD ISLANDS OFF EASTERN HOKKAIDO. SOVIETS ALSO IRRITATED BY PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT'S INTENSIVE PROMOTION OF EXHIBITION AND UNEXPECTEDLY STRONG PUBLIC INTEREST IN IT WHICH REFLECTED INCREASED UNPOPULARITY OF USSR IN HOKKAIDO IN WAKE OF LAST SPRING'S JAPAN-SOVIET FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS. SOVIET PROTEST THAT PRC USING OSTENSIBLY NON-POLITICAL EXHIBITION TO DISSEMINATE ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA REBUFFED BY EVENT'S JAPANESE SPONSORS, AND RUSSIANS SUFFERED FURTHER SETBACK WHEN PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT POSTPONED OPENING OF NEW SOVIET CULTURAL CENTER IN SAPPORO, WHICH THEY HAD HOPED WOULD DIRECT PUBLIC ATTENTION FROM PRC EXHIBITION.  
END SUMMARY.

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2. THREE-WEEK PRC GOODWILL AND TRADE PROMOTION EXHIBITION CLOSED AUGUST 7 IN SAPPORO AFTER DRAWING 642,000 VISITORS--NEARLY TWICE NUMBER ANTICIPATED BY ITS ORGANIZERS. UNEXPECTEDLY HEAVY TURNOUT, EQUIVALENT TO 12 PERCENT OF HOKKAIDO'S POPULATION, ATTRIBUTED PARTLY TO FORTUITOUS SPELL OF GOOD WEATHER DURING EXHIBITION AND TO INTENSIVE PROMOTIONAL EFFORT BY PREFECTURAL GOVERN-

MENT, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND OTHER SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS. ATTENDANCE AT EXHIBITION, FIRST EVER HELD IN HOKKAIDO BY PRC, ALSO STIMULATED BY STRONG CURIOSITY OF PUBLIC IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA AND BY GENERALLY FAVORABLE IMAGE OF PRC IN HOKKAIDO CREATED IN PART BY ITS VIGOROUS SUPPORT OF JAPAN'S CLAIM TO SOVIET-OCCUPIED NORTHERN TERRITORIES OFF ISLAND'S EASTERN COAST. MANY LOCAL OBSERVERS FEEL THAT PUBLIC'S POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF PRC HAS BEEN ENHANCED BY ITS RESENTMENT OF USSR'S HARD-LINE STAND IN LAST SPRING'S JAPAN-SOVIET FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS WHICH RESULTED IN EXTENSIVE LOSSES FOR HOKKAIDO'S FISHING INDUSTRY. SAME OBSERVERS CAUTION AGAINST ATTRIBUTING ANTI-SOVIET OR PRO-CHINESE MOTIVES TO VISITORS; MOST OF WHOM ATTRACTED MORE BY CURIOSITY THAN POLITICS; BUT THEY AGREE THAT LARGE AND APPARENTLY SATISFIED CROWDS AT EXHIBITION ADD UP TO NOTABLE PUBLIC RELATIONS SUCCESS FOR PRC.

3. SOVIET CONSULATE GENERAL IN SAPPORO REPORTEDLY UNHAPPY BOTH WITH PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT'S VIGOROUS PROMOTION OF PRC EXHIBITION AND ITS ORIGINAL DECISION TO INVITE CHINESE TO HOKKAIDO. ALTHOUGH EXHIBITION ADVERTISED AS "NON-POLITICAL" EVENT IN WHICH ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA WOULD BE ESCHEWED, SOVIETS CONSIDERED CHINESE PRESENCE IN HOKKAIDO TO BE PROVOCATIVE REMINDER OF PRC'S SUPPORT OF JAPAN'S CLAIM TO DISPUTED NORTHERN TERRITORIES. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRC EXHIBITION DOUBLY UNWELCOME TO SOVIETS SINCE IT CAME AT TIME WHEN THEY WERE SEEKING TO REFURBISH THEIR PUBLIC IMAGE IN HOKKAIDO WHICH HAD BEEN TARNISHED BY JAPAN-SOVIET FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS. RUSSIANS HOPED TO STEAL PRC'S PROPAGANDA THUNDER AND RESTORE THEIR OWN BATTERED IMAGE BY STAGING, TWO DAYS BEFORE OPENING OF CHINESE EXHIBITION JULY 17, INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF LAVISH NEW SOVIET CULTURAL CENTER IN SAPPORO. BUT SOVIETS NEGLECTED TO OBTAIN ADVANCE APPROVAL OF PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT, PROVIDING GOVERNOR WITH EXCUSE TO DEMAND POSTPONEMENT OF CEREMONY TO LATER DATE THEREBY AVOIDING CONFLICT WITH PRC EXHIBITION. SOURCES WITHIN PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT REPORT THAT CONSERVATIVE GOVERNOR, ALREADY PIQUED AT SOVIET ATTITUDE IN FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS, IN NO MOOD TO ACCOMMODATE RUSSIANS WHO, FOR THEIR PART, ACCEPTED HIS DECISION WITH CONSPICUOUS ILL GRACE.

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMCONSUL SAPPORO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0460  
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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4. SPARRING AMONG RUSSIANS, CHINESE AND PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUED DURING EXHIBITION ITSELF. WHEN SOVIET CONSULATE GENERAL DISPATCHED SEVERAL RUSSIANS TO EXHIBITION SITE TO MONITOR POSSIBLE ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES, THEY WERE REPORTEDLY "SURROUNDED" BY MEMBERS OF SIXTY-MAN CHINESE DELEGATION WHO HAD BEEN FURNISHED WITH I.D. PHOTOS OF SOVIET DIPLOMATS IN SAPPORO. RUSSIANS AND CHINESE THEN ENGAGED IN HEATED DISCUSSION OF MERITS OF PRC BOOK DISPLAY WHICH, SOVIETS COMPLAINED, INCLUDED SEVERAL ANTI-SOVIET POLEMICS. RUSSIANS SUBSEQUENTLY LODGED PROTEST WITH PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT DEMANDING REMOVAL OF OFFENDING BOOKS, BUT WERE ADVISED TO TAKE THEIR COMPLAINT TO PRC EMBASSY IN TOKYO. AMERICAN CONSULATE STAFFERS, WHO ALSO TOURED PRC EXHIBITION (AND WERE IGNORED BY CHINESE), FOUND INEVITABLE PHOTOGRAPHIC DISPLAYS CELEBRATING SINO-JAPANESE OLIDARITY ON NORTHERN TERRITORIES ISSUE BUT LITTLE OVERT ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA. THRUST OF EXHIBITION WAS TO EXTOL RECENT CHINESE INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND TO PROMOTE WIDE VARIETY OF PRC CONSUMER GOODS. CHINESE REPORTEDLY DOWNPLAYED CRITICISM OF SOVIETS PARTLY AT BEHEST OF PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER JAPANESE SPONSORS OF EVENT, AND

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PARTYL TO PROJECT MODERATE AND PRAGMATIC IMAGE OF THEMSELVES TO PUBLIC.

5. COMMENT: PRC EXHIBITION IN HOKKAIDO NOTEWORTHY CHIEFLY AS INDICATION OF DIFFICULTIES FOR SOVIETS CREATED

BY THEIR FISHERY DIPLOMACY IN THIS PART OF JAPAN:  
CHINESE ABLE TO CAPITALIZE ON INCREASED POPULAR AND OFFI-  
CIAL HOSTILITY TOWARD USSR TO SCORE PUBLIC RELATIONS  
SUCCESS AND OUTMANEUVER THEIR RUSSIAN RIVALS. PRC,  
WHICH CONSIDERS HOKKAIDO IMPORTANT MAINLY AS PLATFORM  
FOR PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO FAN RUSSO-JAPANESE  
DISCORD OVER NORTHERN TERRITORIES ISSUE, NOW HAS OPPOR-  
TUNITY TO FOLLOW UP SUCCESSFUL EXHIBITION WITH INCREASED  
TRADE AND CULTURAL CONTACTS. SOVIETS LIKELY TO ATTEMPT  
TO DISCOURAGE ANY GROWTH IN CHINESE INFLUENCE IN HOKKAIDO  
BY STEPPING UP THEIR OWN CULTURAL AND TRADE ACTIVITIES  
THERE. PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS LEADERS  
APPARENTLY WELCOME PROSPECT OF INCREASED SINO-SOVIET  
RIVALRY IN ISLAND AS OPPORTUNITY TO EXTRACT MAXIMUM  
ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE FROM BOTH SIDES. BUT HOKKAIDO'S  
VULNERABILITY TO SOVIET PRESSURE ON FISHERY MATTERS  
MAKES THIS RISKY GAME THE PLAYOUT OF WHICH MERITS CLOSE  
ATTENTION.  
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## Message Attributes

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